

2011 Silverton Jamboree

Please See Ad inside for more details!

August 26th -28th

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Silverton STANDARD & the MINER

50¢

SILVERTON'S PIONEER NEWSPAPER SINCE 1875

Weekly Miner
established 1875

Silverton Standard
established 1889

IN BRIEF

Want to run for school board?

Petitions due Friday

Three seats on the 5-member Silverton school board are up for election on Nov. 1, and candidates wishing to be on the ballot have until Friday, Aug. 26, to submit petitions to the San Juan County Clerk's Office.

The terms of school board members Keri Metzler, Kris Burns and Dan Salazar are coming to an end. Those board members are not term-limited from running again, school officials said.

To qualify for a school board position, a candidate must have been a registered voter in San Juan County for at least 12 con-

IT'S JAMBOREE TIME!

Music festival at Kendall Mountain Aug. 27-29

After a one-year hiatus, the Silverton Jamboree is coming back this weekend, with a wide assortment of music at Kendall Mountain Recreation Area.

"We've got 100 percent Colorado home-grown talent coming," said Melissa Childs, jamboree board member. "We try

to sort of represent different genres from around the state."

The jamboree had previously been held in June. In 2009, the last jamboree faced rainy, cold weather that resulted in less attendance than hoped for.

"We decided to move it to late August," Childs said. "It (the weather) is a crapshoot anyway, but we thought we'd be better off."

See JAMBOREE, Page 4



People dance at the Silverton Jamboree at Kendall Mountain Recreation Area in this 2007 file photo.

THE MIDNIGHT SPECIAL

...ent to be a candidate and
...omination petitions with at
...ast 25 signatures of valid San
...an County voters must be
...ubmitted to the San Juan
...ounty Clerk's Office by 4 p.m.
...riday, Aug. 26.

Potty Park' flushed; its new name is Columbine Park

The town's "Potty Park" on
Blair Street now has an official
name.

The Silverton Town Council
on Monday night voted to
name it Columbine Park, after
hearing a request from the Blair
Street Historic District
association.

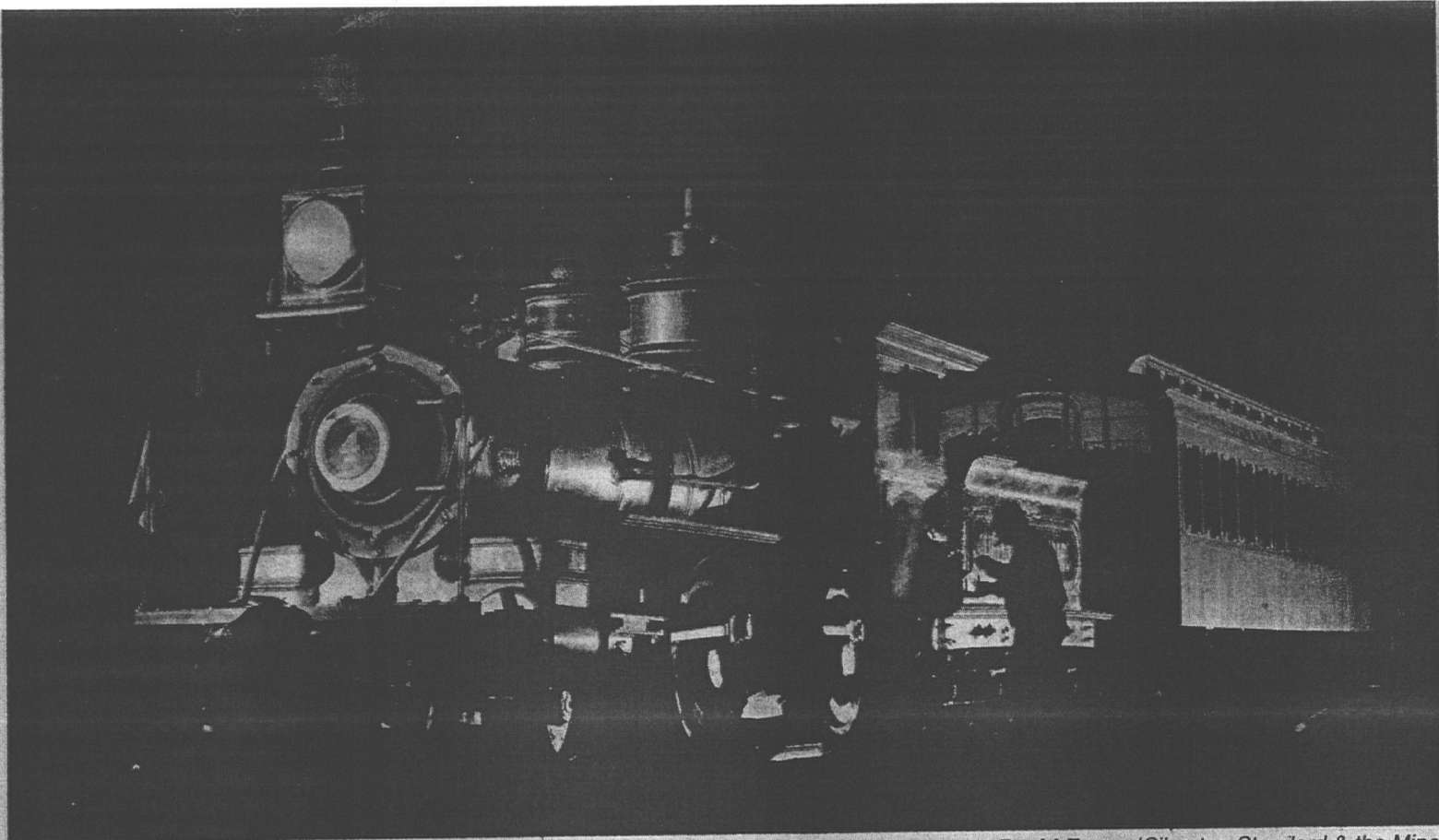
River Workgroup to meet tonight

The River Protection
Workgroup for the Animas
River is scheduled to meet
again tonight (Thursday, Aug.
5) from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at
the Kendall Mountain
recreation Center in Silverton.

Everyone is invited to par-
ticipate. The purpose of this
Workgroup is to make recom-
mendations about how to pro-
tect values on the Animas River
upstream of Baker's Bridge
including several tributaries
while allowing for suitable
water development to contin-
ue.

At this meeting, the detailed
information Sheet about the
Animas River will again be
carefully reviewed and finalized
and the Workgroup will discuss
values in the area of focus that
need to be protected including:

See BRIEFS, Page 4



David Emory/Silverton Standard & the Miner

The Eureka & Palisades Engine #4 spends its time in a shadowy figure late Friday night at the Silverton depot. The wood-fire locomotive was here over the weekend for Railfest. *More photos, Page 7.*

EPA: Superfund there — if wanted

By Mark Esper

A handful of abandoned
mines near Gladstone are respon-
sible for enough contamination
of Cement Creek and the Animas
River to justify Superfund listing,
according to the Environmental
Protection Agency, but that won't
happen without community sup-
port.

Cement Creek mine sites meet criteria, agency says, but it's up to community

In a Town Hall meeting
Thursday, Aug. 18, EPA officials
reviewed data from their fall 2010
sampling of Cement Creek and
the Animas River. They say water
quality is worsening, with zinc,
lead and other heavy metals at
elevated levels.

This in turn is being blamed
for the loss of three of four trout
species since 2005 in the upper
Animas.

And EPA officials said that
while the collaborative approach
to water quality in the upper
Animas spearheaded by the

Animas River Stakeholders Group
has been successful, the worsen-
ing situation on Cement Creek
has compelled the agency or to
study possible Superfund listing.

"The problem is worsening
water quality," said Sabrina
Forrest, site assessment manager
for the EPA in Denver. Forrest
explained that while the EPA

See EPA, Page 6

EPA, from Page 1

considers the problem to be worthy of the National Priorities List (NPL) under the Superfund law, local support would be required as well as a sign-off from the governor.

"It's eligible for listing, but community support is needed for that," Forrest said. And if the Gladstone sites were to be eventually put on the NPL "the community would still have a huge voice on how this would be done."

The goals, Forrest said, are to reduce risk to public health and improve water quality.

"There are elevated levels of metals in fish people are eating," Forrest said.

"If listing is supported (locally) then the EPA will request a letter from the governor," Forrest said.

She said community support could come in the form of letters, a resolution from the San Juan County commissioners, and support from the stakeholders group.

Meanwhile, the EPA is planning a Sept. 16 site tour at Gladstone for those interested in getting a better idea of the situation on the ground up there.

Forrest says the EPA hopes it can determine by Dec. 20 if there is enough local support for NPL listing to proceed. Under that timetable, the listing could be

made official by March 2012.

The preliminary assessment work focused on a cluster of mine sites at and above Gladstone, including the American Tunnel, Gold King Number 7 level, the Mogul and Grand Mogul and the Red and Bonita mines.

Peter Butler of Durango, a steering committee member for the Animas River Stakeholders Group, which was formed as a collaborative approach to water quality issues in 1994, said Cement Creek has seen a steady increase in metals loading since a treatment plant at Gladstone was shut down in 2004.

Up to 845 gallons per minute of acid mine drainage is pouring into Cement Creek from just four abandoned mines above Gladstone.

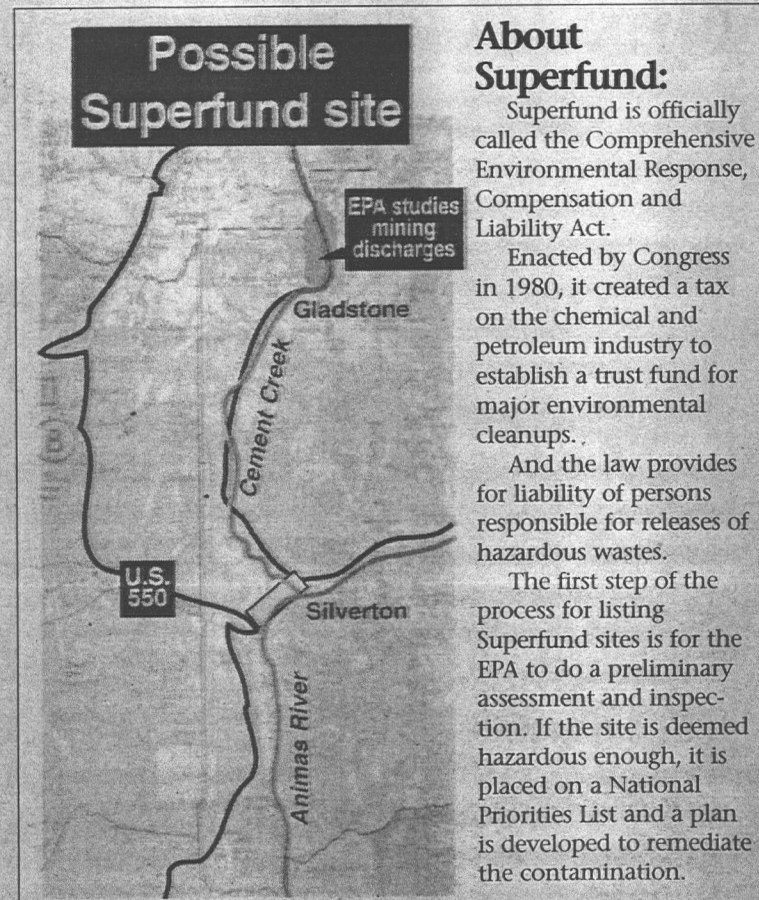
"That's a very substantial amount," Butler said.

Butler said the upper Animas was meeting EPA aquatic life standards in the late 1990s at the sampling station at Baker's Bridge, just above Hermosa.

"And we were still meeting the standards in 2003," Butler said. But he said since then, "we've been exceeding acute and chronic standards quite a bit."

And Butler pointed to "biological evidence" of a growing problem.

A 2005 fish survey on the



upper Animas found four species of trout in the Cascade Creek area. But the 2010 survey found only one of those species left. And the ones that disappeared happened to be the ones most sensitive to heavy metals loading.

At this point, Butler said possible solutions include various scenarios for a water treatment plant on Cement Creek, bulkheads for the four mines discharging the most, or some combination of that.

Then comes the question of

About Superfund:

Superfund is officially called the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act.

Enacted by Congress in 1980, it created a tax on the chemical and petroleum industry to establish a trust fund for major environmental cleanups.

And the law provides for liability of persons responsible for releases of hazardous wastes.

The first step of the process for listing Superfund sites is for the EPA to do a preliminary assessment and inspection. If the site is deemed hazardous enough, it is placed on a National Priorities List and a plan is developed to remediate the contamination.

EPA, said the agency is planning to schedule "listening sessions" starting next month.

"The ball is really in your court," Lane told about 60 local residents and others at the meeting upstairs in Silverton Town Hall. "We need to hear from you all."

But some at the meeting expressed skepticism of the need for Superfund.

John Ferguson, a mining engineer from Silverton, said "the EPA is asking us to stake our liveli-

"If (Superfund) listing is supported (locally) then the EPA will request a letter from the governor."

Sabrina Forrest,
site assessment
manager, EPA

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John Ferguson,
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"The state of Colorado has a huge responsibility for this situation."

Sunnyside walked out of this district and their \$5 million bond was returned.

Todd Hennis,
owner of the Gold King Mine

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THANKS!

The Hardrockers Holidays Committee would like to thank all

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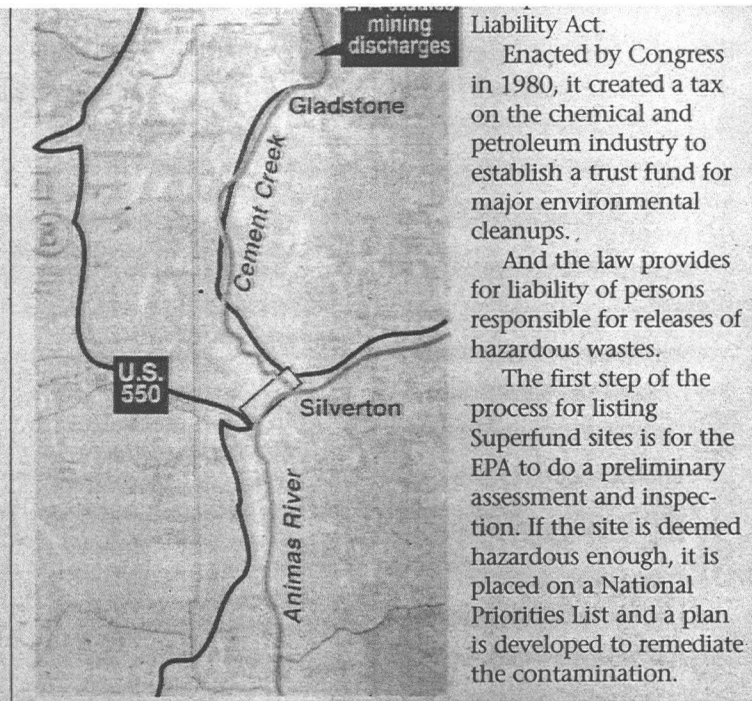
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Then comes the question of who pays. Butler said options include seeking damages from Sunnyside Gold's parent company, Kinross; luring a large mining company to reopen the Gold King and take on the cleanup liability; taking an incremental approach with a pilot treatment project that could be expanded; invoking Superfund; or a combination thereof.

Jennifer Lane, community involvement coordinator for the

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John Ferguson, a mining engineer from Silverton, said "the EPA is asking us to stake our livelihoods and our community on one set of samples." He said the agency's laboratory procedures have been questioned in the past.

Forrest told Ferguson that the EPA also takes into consideration water sampling done by others.

Todd Hennis of Golden, who described himself as the "unfortunate owner of the Gold King and Mogul mines," said the EPA has been spinning "fair tales."

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"We're supportive of clean-water initiatives. But we're not supportive of the damage that can be done from the perception of a Superfund site."

Aaron Brill, owner, Silverton Mountain Ski Area

actually owns the American Tunnel portal (by a matter of inches).

THANKS!

The Hardrockers Holidays Committee would like to thank all our sponsors and donors for their support. And thanks to everyone who helped make the 2011 Hardrockers Holidays a success!

Thanks to the following:

- Silverton Artworks
- Jack Clark, in memory of Billy Rhoades
- Eric Schoenbaum.

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"The problem started in 2000 when water started coming out of the Mogul," Hennis said. He said that was a result of the American Tunnel bulkheads causing water to back up. The water table has since risen an estimated 1,000 feet, causing acid mine drainage to seep from ever higher points on the mountain.

Hennis accused state officials of engaging in "pollution trading" with Sunnyside Gold, with a consent decree letting the mining firm off the hook for water quality problems in the Gladstone area.

"The state of Colorado has a huge responsibility for this situation," Hennis said. "Sunnyside walked out of this district and their \$5 million bond was returned."

Hennis said the best solution would be for a mining firm to reopen the Gold King and assume responsibility for the water quality issues.

Hennis said he thinks there is \$700 million in gold still retrievable from the Gold King mine.

"That could be 200 jobs for 20 years," Hennis said.

In the meantime, Hennis said Sunnyside's parent company, Kinross, "can fund operations of a treatment plant here and we can avoid the Superfund stigma."

Kay Zillich, hydrologist with the Bureau of Land Management, noted that agency, it turns out,

ception of a Superfund site."

Aaron Brill, owner, Silverton Mountain Ski Area

actually owns the American Tunnel portal (by a matter of inches).

"It comes to the surface on BLM land about that far," Zillich said, spreading her arms apart. She said the agency might even be able to come up with funding for a treatment plant, but not for actual operations.

And Zillich said the BLM "could pursue cost recovery from potentially responsible parties."

She said the BLM figures there are "twenty-something companies we may want to approach about potential liability."

County Board Chairman Ernie Kuhlman worried about the longer haul.

"You're going to have to treat it forever," Kuhlman said of the mine discharges. "The long-term responsibility is the problem."

Aaron Brill, owner of Silverton Mountain Ski area near the mines in question, said the stigma aspect is a huge concern of his.

"The image of a Superfund site can't be understated," Brill said. He said he wants the water quality problem to go away, but he doesn't want his visitors to leave too.

"We're supportive of clean-water initiatives," Brill said. "But we're not supportive of the damage that can be done from the perception of a Superfund site."

He said the EPA needs to do "proper marketing" of the CERCLA law.

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Featuring 100% Colorado Homegrown Talent

The Motel • Aftergrass • A Dub Rock

The Rowdy Shadehouse Band • Salem • Waiting on Trail

Bruce Hayes • Too Little O₂ • & more

Kids & Family events • Belly Dancing • Late Night Juke Joints

Affordable Riverside Camping • Sunday "Bloody Mary" Sunday

Tickets \$35 advanced & \$40 at gate visit: www.silvertonjamboree.net

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